The students of class 5 a Isa
Academic year 2018-19
with their teacher Valentina Tenedini
of Liceo delle scienze umane e scientifico
REGINA MARIA ADELAIDE - Aosta - Italy
present:

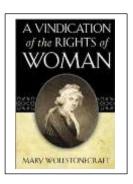


## Sisters stood up for us all

A bilingual, blended project







# FEMINISM IS THE RADICAL NOTION THAT WOMEN ARE PEOPLE

Women have always played a fundamental role in society, but they have not always been given the right recognition, let alone the same rights (political, civil and economic) as men.

Mary Wollestonecraft (1759-1797) author of the famous essay: *A vindication of the rights of woman* (1792) is considered the first advocate of the movement for gender equality, that started claiming equal rights for women in the late 18th century.

Nevertheless none of the 19th century reform acts (1832, 1867, 1884) regarded women.

Even **Queen Victoria** (who reigned from **1837** to **1901**) thought that women should not vote, however not everyone agreed with her, so the campaign for the enfranchisement of women began officially in 1860.

However since a few decades of pacific demonstration had proved ineffective, from 1903 some supporters of the cause decided to start using more drastic actions in order to gain proper attention.

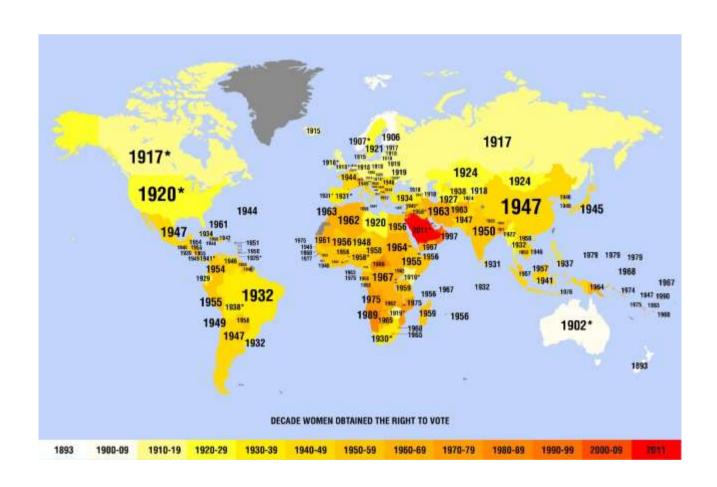


#### FEMALE SUFFRAGE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The right to vote implies the opportunity for citizens to take a side in the general elections. Unlike men, women have not always had the right to vote throughout contemporary history. Female suffrage, i.e. women's right to vote, was not a universal fact until the late 20th century, and women became enfranchised in each country, sometimes with several decades' difference.

**New Zealand** was the first country in the world to introduce the universal suffrage i.e. for men and women alike in **1893**; while in Europe the first country where women could vote was **Finland** in 1906. In **Italy** women voted for the first time during the general elections of March and April **1946** (after World War II) and then for the historical referendum - monarchy or republic - **(June 2, 1946)**.

The last country to make women eligible of the right to vote in the world was **Saudi Arabia** in **2015**; The right to vote is now in effect all over the world, but gender equality is still far from being a fully achieved fact.



New Zeland	1893	Netherlands	1919
Australia	1901	USA	1920
Finland	1906	Sweden	1921
Norway	1913	Portugal	1931
Iceland	1913	Spain	1931
Denemark	1915	Japan	1945
URSS	1915	Italy	1946
Canada	1917	France	1946
Great Britain	1918	Belgium	1948
Austria	1918	Greece	1952
Germany	1919	Switzerland	1971

The chart displays the year women voted for the first time in each country

#### Women at WORK... WHEN, HOW, WHY?

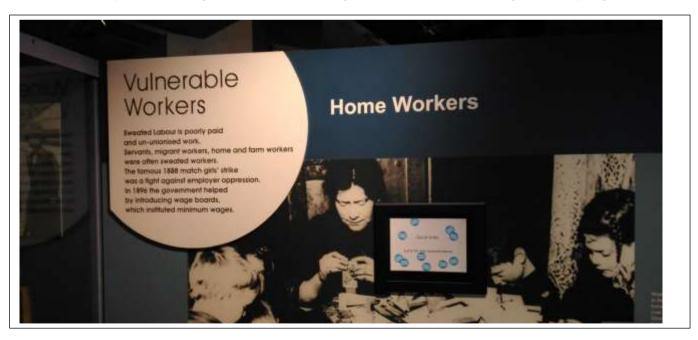
It is widely believed that the main step towards emancipation for women was the conquest of a job outside the home.

As a matter of fact, considering the condition of women in society (at least in the Western world) in the right historical perspective it becomes evident that all women, who were not from the middle class or aristocrats, have always worked, first in **agriculture** and then in factories, as well as having the traditional roles of wives and mothers.

The Industrial Revolution, which first took place in Britain as it is known, also implied a social revolution, which with the demand for new jobs, labour, mass movement, capital, goods and workers, changed the structure of society drastically (phenomena like the rise of the working class, capitalism, the conurbations, determined a new shape and size of the cities, the evolution of the transport network and trades, to name but a few).

All throughout the 1800s in Britain the presence of the working class, a new factor, gave rise to other phenomena such as: the rise of the Workers' Union, (which were to become the TRADE UNIONS) and bills like the 14 Hour's Act, the 12 hour's Act, or the Factory and the Mine's act, that were passed in the attempt of regulating the workers' conditions (including those of children and women).

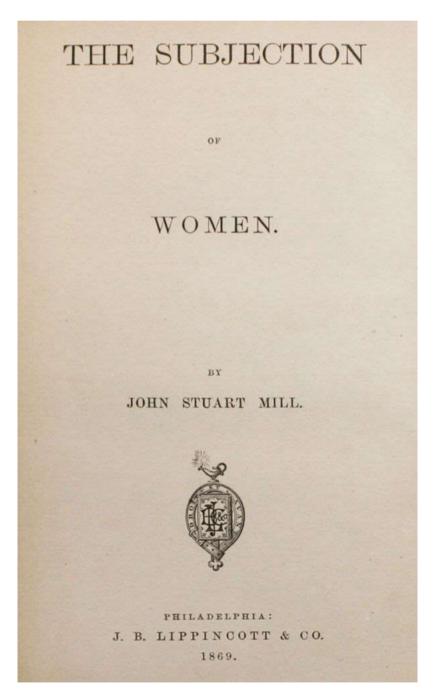
In this context the condition of female employment deserves some special attention; women were used by industries at first with domestic work; this situation made them atypical workers, because although they did not have a set number of working hours, like the men who worked in factories, their conditions were far from being safe or secure. Not only were women on "piecework" at home, but they kept working at their home, raising the children, and keeping the family together.



#### WOMEN STOOD UP FOR US ALL

In the early 19th century, women had no place in national politics. One of the first people to criticize that situation was the liberal thinker **John Stuart Mill** (1806-1873), who in his essay called "*The subjection of women*" (1869) proposed a bill in favour of women's right to vote. However, he found a large opposition among the MPs.

In spite of that, public opinion was stirred and more and more people began discussing the theme which came to be known later as "*The Cause*", giving rise to the movement for women's rights, made up of two groups termed *Suffragists* and *Suffragettes*.



Cover of "The Subjection of women" by John Stuart Mill.

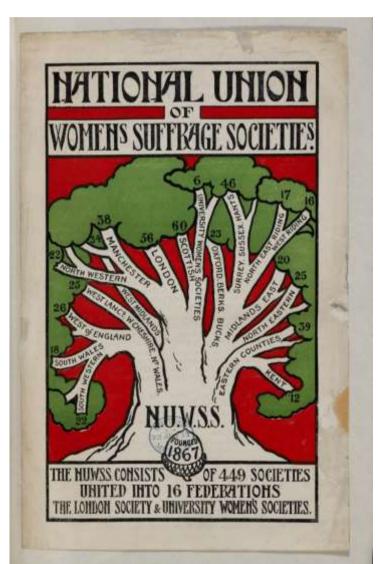
#### **SUFFRAGISTS**

The suffragists' movement, which came together under the **National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)**, was created in 1897 under the leadership of **Millicent Fawcett** (1947-1929).

The movement wanted to achieve its goals (basically gender equality) with politeness, intelligence, discussion, education and especially without violence, in order to prove that women were as entitled as men to get involved in politics. The Suffragists used instruments like petitions, posters, leaflets, calendars, marches and public meetings in order to win consensus for their cause.

Most members of the Suffragists belonged to the middle-class like Millicent Fawcett.

In order to gain the support from as many working women as possible, the movement wrote pamphlets which encouraged women to protect their interests of wives, mothers and workers.



Poster of the Suffragists movement.

### National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies,

14, Great Smith Street, S.W.

President: Mrs. HENRY FAWCETT, LL.D.

# SOME REASONS Why Working Women Want the Vote.

- Because as long as women cannot vote for Members of Parliament they are not asked what they want, and they are treated like children who do not know what is good or what is bad for them.
- Because only those who wear the shoe know where it pinches, and women know best what they wan' and what they don't want.
- Because Members of Parliament must attend to the wants and wishes of those who have votes, and they have not time to attend to the wants and wishes of women who have not got votes.
- Because laws are made which specially affect women's work and the work of their children.
- Because if women are working as dressmakers, tailoresses, printers, confectioners, and laundresses, or in any factory or workshop, the laws under which they work are made for women without women being asked if these laws are good or bad for them.
- Because if the laws under which women work are bad, women cannot have those laws changed unless they have the vote.
- Because the vote has been given to women in some of our Colonies and has been of great use.
- Because the way to help women is to give them the means of helping themselves.
- Because the vote is the best and most direct way by which women can get their wishes and wants attended to.

Price 4d. per 100; 2/6 per 1,000.

Published by the NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES, 14, Great Smith Street, S.W.; and Printed by The Templan Printing Works; 168, Edmund Street, Hirmingham.

#### **SUFFRAGETTES**

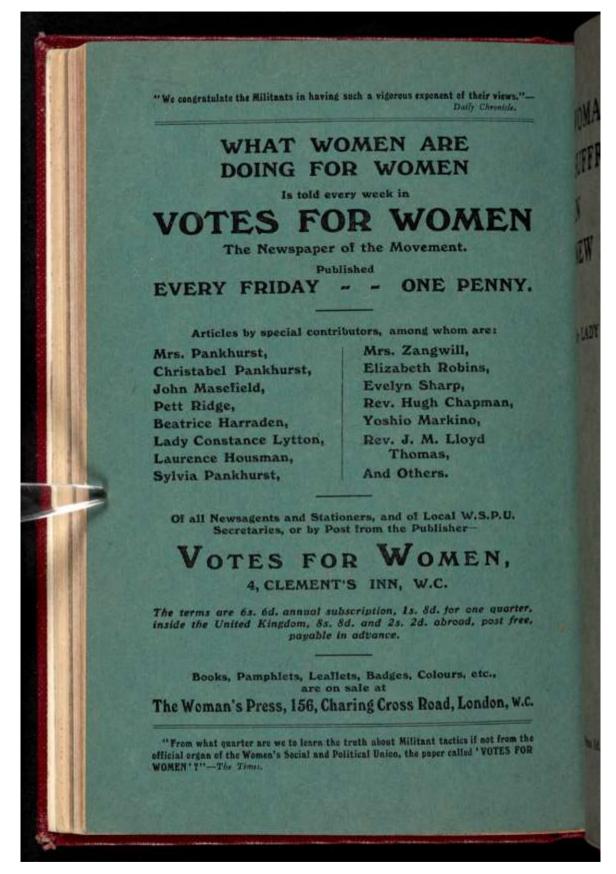
As the Suffragists' movement failed to achieve its goals, since not enough interest was dedicated to 'the cause' by the British Parliament, some women decided to start a more radical type of campaign. They were called 'Suffragettes' by the press in a derogative way and their most distinguished leaders were **Emmeline Pankhurst** (1858-1928) and her daughter **Christabel** (1880-1958), who founded **the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU)** in **1903**.

Their motto was "Deeds not Words"; as a matter of fact, they would adopt militant tactics in order to gain attention. They wrote letter to MP's, smashed the windows of public buildings, set fires, chained themselves to railings or interrupted public meetings; in October 1905 Christabel Pankhurst, repeatedly shouted "Will the liberal government give vote to women?" during the speech of a liberal statesman; a police attack followed which ended up with her arrest. She was the first of many suffragettes to get imprisoned.



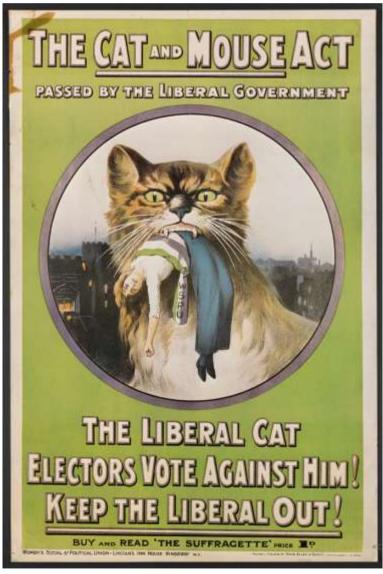
Woman chained to a railing for protest.

In addition to that they used posters, marches, and pamphlets; they also had their own weekly magazine called "*Votes for women*".



In spite of being arrested the Suffragettes would continue their protest in prison. They went on hunger strike and were forcibly fed (which was another act of violence); but as Westminster did not want to turn them into martyrs, a bill call ed the Cat and Mouse Act was passed, according to which the suffragettes who got sick in prison were allowed to go home until they recovered and would be brought back in prison afterwards in order to finish their sentence. Emmeline Pankhurst went through this 11 times.

These women's unprecedented courage should not be taken for granted: it must be noted that those who chose to devote themselves to 'the cause' did not often count on their family's and friends' support; the suffragettes who were known to be demonstrating or going on strike would more than likely lose their jobs in the first place; those who were arrested would be driven away from their homes and children, thus sacrificing not only their own time, but their financial stability, social prestige and the love of their dear ones and sometimes even their own lives. With the outbreak of the First World War both Suffragists and Suffragettes decided to stop campaigning, since a more urgent effort was needed of them by the nation.



Caricature of the Cat and Mouse Act in the Suffragette magazine

"What draws men and women together is stronger than the brutality and tyranny which drive them apart".

## Millicent Fawcett (1847-1929) An activist for women's emancipation

Millicent Fawcett was born in Aldenburgh to Newson Garrett (1812-1893) and his wife Louisa (1813-1903).

When she was twelve years old she went to London to study in a private school with her sister. Seven years later she attended a conference by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), one of the first supporter of women's suffrage, and that event inspired her social and political commitment.

Thanks to him, Millicent met Henry Fawcett (1833-1884), she became his secretary and then they married in 1867.



Statue of Millicent Fawcett - by Gilian Wearing 1918,

It was the first woman's statue to be set up in the British Parliament Square.

The following year Millicent joined the *Suffrrage Committee* in London; the first association to support women's cause for the right to vote.

In 1884, after her husband's death, she retired from the political activity, resuming it the following year to become one of the key members of the *Women's Local Government Society*.

In 1890 she became president of the **NUWSS (National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies)**; the largest group committed to the 'Cause'. Within this union Millicent did not just focus on women's rights, but she also fought for the abolition of slavery and raised funds to support women and children during the Boer war.

In the years 1901-1914, when the liberal government still refused to grant the right to vote to women, there was a clear separation within the movement between: **suffragists** and **suffragettes**.

The suffragists, lead by M. Fawcett, believed in campaigning with pacific methods while the suffragettes, led by Emmelicne Pankhurst, decided to become militant, since pacific methods had proved ineffective.

They were represented by the *WPSU* (*Women's Social and Political Union*) and tried to get attention for their cause with actions like noisy demonstrations, vandalism, acts of self-injury or hunger-strikes (after being imprisoned).

When the UK entered the First World War the suffragette supported the war effort, suspending the militant campaign and encouraging women to replace men in the workplaces they had left to go to the front.

On the contrary Millicent Fawcett, being a pacifist and non-interventionist, believed that women should not support the war effort.

In 1916 Fawcett encouraged her supporters to write to MPs urging them to grant women the right to vote. This was achieved with a new bill, the *Representation of the People Act* which in **February 1918** made all women over 30 eligible of the right to vote.

In 1919 Millicent Fawcett resigned from her leading position within the NUWSS, which became the

National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship under the guidance of Eleonor Rathbone.

Milicent Fawcett lived long enough to see the **Equal Franchise Act**, that in 1928 finally made all women over 21 eligible to vote just like men.

She died in 1929 and she is remembered as a heroine.



'I cannot say I became a suffragist. I always was one, from the time I was old enough to think at all about the principles of Representative Government'

#### "Justice and judgement lie often a world apart".

#### **Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)**



Have you heard the name of Emmeline Pankhurst? Even if you have not, you should know that modern women and men alike are very much indebted to this great, unconventional and brave woman.

Emmeline Pankhurst lived between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and almost throughout all her life she fought hard for the cause of women's suffrage and emancipation.

She was born in 1858 and joined the suffragette movement when she was only 14 years old; soon after she became the main leader of the movement.

In 1903 she founded the **Women's Social and Political Union** (WSPU), an association that fought for women's rights; her eldest daughter, Christabel, equally committed to the cause, became the leader of the Union some years later.

When Emmeline Pankhurst saw that not much attention was being given to the 'cause', with pacific demonstrations, she and her followers, called derogatorily 'suffragists' by the press, decided to start a more radical and militant campaign, that resorted to violent, dramatic actions. Therefore she was imprisoned several times, but never gave up.

From 1915 she travelled widely all over Europe to gain support for the 'cause' and when she came back to Britain after a trip to Russia, she saw her goal being achieved. The **1918 Representation of the People Act** granted women over the age of 30 the right to vote.

However full political equality with men was not reached until 10 years later, in **February 1928** when **women over 21** could vote at last. Emmeline Pankhurst died in June that year.



" We never went to prison in order to be martyrs. We went there in order that we might obtain the rights of citizenship. We were willing to break laws that we might force men to give us the right to make laws."

Emmeline arrested during a protest (1914)

#### Most famous works and quotes:

Emmeline Pankhurst was famous also for her public declarations and speeches, and many of them are still known and popular today. Here are some of her most famous quotes:

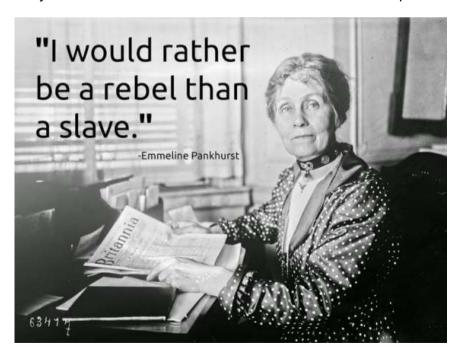
"We have to free half of the human race, the women, so that they can help to free the other half."

"Once they are aroused, once they are determined, nothing on earth and nothing in heaven will make women give way; it is impossible."

"Every man with a vote was considered a foe to woman suffrage unless he was prepared to be actively a friend."

'I began to think about the vote in women's hands not only as a right but as a desperate necessity'

Emmeline Pankhurst wrote book called "Suffragette. My own story" her autobiography tells her story and her commitment to the battle for women's emancipation.



Men make the moral code and they expect women to accept it.

They have decided that it is entirely right and proper for men to fight for their liberties and their rights, but that it is not right and proper for women to fight for theirs.

#### **Emily Davison (1872-1913)**



Emily Davison was a proud, combative, daring activist of the movement for the emancipation of women in the 20th century who died tragically and untimely for the realization of her ideals.

#### THE COMMITMENT TO THE 'CAUSE'

Emily was born in London in 1872 in a large family; her outstanding intelligence and education results earned her studies and a university admission, whose career she had to quit because of the family economical shortcomings (her father had died and her mother could no longer pay the university fees).

So Emily started teaching but resumed her university studies at St. Hugh's College, Oxford, where she graduated in English language and literature with honours.

In 1906 she joined the Women Social and Political Union (WSPU) founded by Emmeline Pankhurst; for which, showing soon her revolutionary and unstoppable nature, she accomplished two falled attacks, to the Minister David Lloyd George, placing a bomb in his home. Therefore she was arrested and while being in prison she continued her campaign with a hunger strike.

Emily totally embodied the *sufragettes* motto "deeds, not words": in 1911, when women were excluded from both political life and career, and they were not even admitted into the parliament, unlike men, Emily managed to introduce herself, hiding in a closet of the Palace of Westminster, during the census, to be able to assert the presence of a woman in the House of Commons.

#### THE DEMISE

On June 4, 1913, during the famous public event of the Epsom Derby that saw the presence of the Royal Family and the horse of King George V, Anmer in the race, Davison stepped in the middle of the track and was inevitably run over by the King's horse. The accident resulted in a severe head injury and various fractures throughout her body; she died four days later. It was most likely not a suicide, Davison probably just wanted to hang the suffragette's tricolour to the King's horse's bridle, to draw attention to the 'cause'. Another hypothesis about her death claimed that she was actually pushed into the middle of the track, being considered by many an undesirable person. To credit this hypothesis would have been the return train tickets which were found in her coat pocket and the fact that she was expected, that same evening, to attend a suffragettes' social event.

The horse was not injured and almost immediately returned to the race. The King's jockey, Herbert Jones, suffered a slight head injury, but was troubled by the accident for the rest of his life (seeing the suffragette's face often in his night dreams), and he committed suicide in 1951.

Emily's death undoubtedly caused both shock and scandal. Davison was and is still considered one of the main protagonists of the movement for women's emancipation in England and Europe.



The crowd at the funeral of Emily Davison

#### SUFFRAGETTES IN TROUSERS

#### Men who supported the female suffrage campaign



While the campaign for votes for women is predominately recognised as a cause fought by women, these had the support of some men too, both in Parliament and outside; these men were not afraid of challenging the general opinion of the time, or to join the campaign for women's suffrage even if this meant the risk of ruining their own reputation and career.

#### MALE MILITANTS

The campaign for women's suffrage began in earnest in 1866 when Millicent's sister, Elizabeth Garrett and Emily Davies organised the first large scale petition to Parliament asking for women to be given the vote on the same terms as men. Between 1870 and 1880 there was also a growing number of male supporters for the Suffragette movement. MPs and Peers began to support the women by presenting additional petitions calling for an end to male suffrage. Between 1867 and 1889, thirteen Bills proposing legislation on the issue were discussed in Parliament - all of these proposals were put forward by men. In 1888, 169 MPs signed a statement urging the Government to provide additional time to discuss a women's suffrage Bill.

The Reform Acts of 1832, 1867 and 1884 allowed increasingly larger numbers of men to vote. With this rise came more men who wanted women to be able to have their voices heard as well. MPs such as John Stuart Mill, Jacob Bright, Peter McLagan, and Walter McLaren all worked to have women included in the parliamentary process. In 1907, a group of 42 influential men including Henry Nevinson, Israel Zangwill, Hugh Franklin, Henry Harben, and Gerald Gould, formed the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. Israel Zangwill declared the group's support by saying, "The petticoat no longer makes the Suffragette. We are suffragettes – suffragettes in trousers."

Men who supported women in this way often had to put up with ridicule and many risked their careers. Others risked their liberty, among them it is worth remembering: Victor Storr and Thomas Bayard Simmonds, Keir Hardie and Frederick Pethick Lawrence.

On 28th October 1908, Victor Storr and Thomas Bayard Simmonds got into in the Public Gallery and demanded "justice for the women of England". While they threw suffrage handbills into the crowds, some of the women in the Ladies Gallery chained themselves to

the heavy metal grille that obscured women from the Chamber. Afterwards the Speaker declared that the "decencies of the House had been violated."

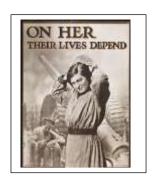
**Keir Hardie** MP regularly spoke in the House on the subject of female suffrage, questioned Government ministers on the treatment of suffragette prisoners and attended WSPU events.

On entering the Commons in 1910, socialist George Lansbury quickly affirmed his support for women's suffrage and for women campaigners, however militant their actions. Speaking in the House of Commons on May 22nd 1912 he said, "These are working women... No one will want to argue that these women have undertaken this imprisonment, and the torture of forcible feeding merely for the fun of the thing or merely to get notoriety." Indeed he went further, resigning his seat and seeking re-election as a women's suffrage candidate. But while women supported his case, the Labour Party was openly hostile towards him as he began to support suffragette militancy.

Another hardline supporter of women's suffrage was Frederick Pethick Lawrence, (who added his wife Emmeline Pethick's surname to his own, on marriage in 1901); he was joint editor of the publication 'Votes for Women' with his wife Emmeline and played an active role in the militant suffragette movement between 1906 and 1912. In an attempt to cut back the rising tired of suffrage 'crimes' the Government made an example of him. He was imprisoned, and forcibly fed on many occasions; what is more he also had to face bankruptcy. He was an MP between 1923 and 1931 and remained influential in Parliament as an elder statesman in the House of Lords later in life.



In 1960, years after all women had finally won the right to vote, the now knighted Lord Pethick-Lawrence declared: "All down history women have supported men in their fight for liberty. They have toiled with them, suffered with them, died with them. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the fact that in the militant struggle of British women for their own emancipation, some men stood with them in the fight."





#### WAR ALLOWED WOMEN TO STAND ON THEIR FEET

At the end of the 19th century in Europe there was an enormous difference between men and women in terms of rights and roles. Women were considered irrational, therefore they were not eligible to vote; furthermore they were completely subjected to their husbands, or men at home, at work and and in society. The difference in the female and male social standards was reinforced during the Victorian Age, when women's conditions became even harder.

The first official Suffrage Unions were formed in the early 20th century in the USA, in Britain and in the North of Europe; they campainged actively for the right to vote, but as the Unions were illegal, their actions often broke the law and were considered immoral.

#### THE TWO WORLD WARS

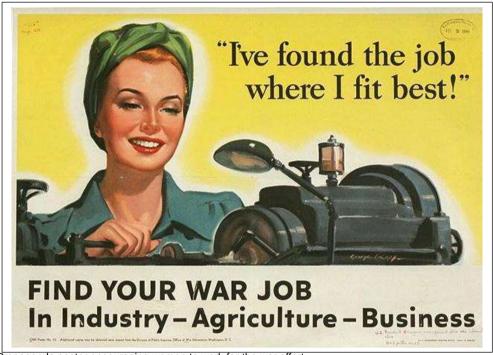
One of the most decisive factors for the emancipation of women



First World War. The mobilization of armies dispersed millions of workers across Europe from both factories and fields. However in times of war production could not be stopped, but it had to increase rapidly. So women, who had always worked in the fields, in the war years began to be requested in the factories, especially those reconverted to the war effort ('you make us shells' states the English War Poet S. Sasson in his famous, sarcastic poem 'Glory of women'). It was an important task, as it was emphasized by propaganda posters. Soon, women began to complete the jobs traditionally assigned to men, such as driving buses or repairing electrical systems. As the conflict went on women were needed also by the army, although they were never forced to fight; each army had female departments dealing with communications, supplies and above all healthcare. The Red Cross, also named " the Great White Army", had first-hand experience of every tragic aspect of life of the front.

Regardless of the role that women had in War times, European women soon became aware of their value, so much so that during and after the War, that more and more of them started to claim the same (political, economic and social) rights as men.

The new situation clashed with the stereotypes of women seen as weaker and lesser, as they proved as able as men in the same workplaces. Therefore after the War a new awareness rose in both society and politics regarding the role and the skills of women, which gradually paved the way to the enfranchisment of women: in **Britain** in **1918**, **Germany** in **1919**, in **the USA** in **1920**.



Propaganda poster encouraging women to work for the war effort



World War I - Women nurses

**World War II** also contributed to the cause of women's emancipation, as women were actually called to participate in the conflict performing various tasks and duties, this time also at the front. To name but a few examples 350,000 American women worked as *nurses, mechanics, radio operators*; in Italy and France women fought alongside with men in the Resistance movements. Such unprecedented fact allowed a change in the attitude of the political institutions.

Therefore the events that took place during the first part of the 20th century, in particular the Two World Wars, increased the number of the countries that allowed women to vote.

In Italy women voted for the first time in 1946 in the referendum to choose between the republic or the monarchy. In France, suffrage was made universal by the introduction of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

World War II photos and propaganda posters

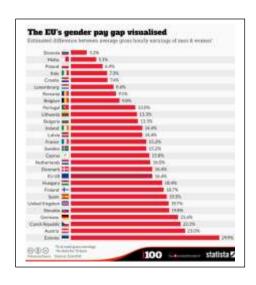




#### AND TODAY?...

The progress made in favour of women's emancipation is evident today. Although some languages still bear traces of the prevalence of the male gender (e.g. lacking names referring to professions or trades when performed by a woman —which prove the legacy of a past, obsolete civilization), nonetheless it cannot be denied that, at least in Western societies, the role of the woman has exactly the same value as that of man.

However, given all the time in history when it was thought that women were actually intellectually and morally inferior to men, in spite of the progress they have made to assert themselves in the countries of the so called first and second world, in actual facts there is still a gap between men and women as far as pay, rights, working conditions, job and career opportunities are concerned, not to mention the unfair treatment of working mothers, especially in the private sector.







So in these days and age where women keep being discriminated (when not punished or murdered) because of questionable ethical, familiar, relational, working principles, one may wonder if the suffragettes and suffragists of the past century would consider their battle to be over...







To be continued...

The contents of this project have been inspired by both the historical recurrence, and the visit to the People's History Museum in Manchester.

The texts produced are original but based on the information acquired from our school textbooks and online material whose bibliographical references have been reported as follows

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